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Moreover, the book is far from a review of already published facts. It sets before the reader a great number of new investigations of much interest, illustrated by many new figures, whose freshness is as invigorating as a sea breeze. To one who restates in better form our old knowledge, and adds so much that is new, it is easy to forgive the possible slight distortion of perspective which we shall easily escape when at a greater distance from the facts. It is only bare justice to recognize in this work a master hand, and to hail it as one of the books predestined to become a classic. — C. R. B.

### A new school botany.

It is a good sign when university professors interest themselves in secondary education. Too often text-books for high schools have been prepared by those who do not know the subject; and it may be further stated that occasionally text-books have been prepared by college men who do not know the schools. That happy combination of experience which brings together the two kinds of knowledge is demanded for the preparation of such books.

Almost every university will be represented presently by a botanical text-book for the secondary schools. In the opinion of the reviewer, the chief criticism to offer in reference to most of these books is that they attempt to present too great an abundance of material, and also material that is too difficult. It is hard for the average college man to appreciate how unfamiliar the material of modern botany is to the young student of the secondary school. A rapid succession of facts, all of which are new to his experience, is too apt to result in bewilderment rather than knowledge.

The last candidate in this field is from the pen of Professor Atkinson,<sup>3</sup> of Cornell University, who shows an appreciation of the situation, and who has certainly had a large and successful experience with elementary classes. The book is a hard one to criticise, as it is a combination of commendable and careless features. Some of the features that should receive warm commendation are wealth of illustration, short paragraphs with distinct headings, originality of presentation, and especially the ecological chapters upon soil formation, zonal distribution, and occupation of land. Certainly so many commendable features more than justify the publication of the book.

On the other hand, carelessness of statement and want of logical organization are apparent. This carelessness amounts frequently to error. The lack of organization is indicated on the surface by such facts as that the division of the book devoted to physiology has received no title and part number, such as have been given to Morphology and Ecology; and that the matter included

<sup>3</sup> ATKINSON, GEORGE FRANCIS. — *Elementary Botany*. Small 8 vo. pp. xxiii + 444. *figs.* 509. New York: Henry Holt & Co. \$1.25.

under the various headings is frequently not what the heading indicates, as, for example, Chapter XII. This fault culminates in the division of the book given to ecology, which is in a remarkably indefinite condition.

It may be that an occasional lapse into poetical style has its place in stimulating interest in the secondary schools, but the reviewer questions whether a sentimental interest should have any connection with scientific training.

The introduction of photographs of typical plant associations is very commendable, but something must be done to make such photographs significant. This criticism has reference not only to the book in hand, but to the general use of such pictures. If ecology is to take the prominent place in elementary botanical education that it deserves, we must have publishers get beyond the dim and hazy landscapes which may be capable of interpretation by the trained ecologist, but which mean little or nothing to the elementary student.

Professor Atkinson's book is one of great interest, and will be a stimulus to proper botanical study in secondary schools. The weak points are such as often appear in the work of a very busy man, who may not lay special stress upon logical presentation and exact statement.—J. M. C.

#### Bokorny's text-book.<sup>4</sup>

THIS is the latest contribution to the long list of German text-books. It is intended for use in the technical schools and gymnasias, and seeks to present the subject without requiring of the student too great "expenditure of time or effort of memory." To this end a novel approach to the subject is introduced. Thirty-five pages are devoted to the illustrated descriptions of some of the commonest seed plants, the violet, mustard, pear, etc. These descriptions are in the simplest language, and are evidently intended to be taken in connection with laboratory study of the types selected. However remote such an approach may be from a logical presentation of the subject, there is some reason in the plea that the student may be thus gently induced to careful observations, and well oriented in the new field by learning first the technical interpretation of the plants he has always known. The rest of the text suggests an effort to give good place to each of the schools with too great emphasis upon none. It is an exemplification of the extremely various ideas which prevail as to which interpretation of the plant world may best be presented first to the beginner. The author, save for the departure in the first chapters, does not commit himself. The organs of the plant body are taken up in logical sequence in the second part. This would serve equally

<sup>4</sup> BOKORNY, TH.—Lehrbuch der Botanik. 8vo. pp. vi+226. *figs.* 170. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann. 1898. *M.* 2.40.